RRR
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Down With the Christian Coalition

by Llewellyn H. Rockwell, Jr.

The leadership is rotten, I used to say about the Christian Coalition, but the grass roots are great. That turns out to be an oversimplification. The leadership's penchant for power politics and Republican hackery has a very long reach. For example, take a look at the Coalition's score cards passed out during this primary season.

In the Alabama Senate Republican primary, for example, there were seven candidates. Newspapers profiled them one by one, but it was difficult for most people to keep track. Does anyone have a chart that simplifies the issues for the voters? Ralph Reed to the rescue.

The Coalition score cards arrived by the droves in the mail. They were passed out at every church for two weeks before the election. They were handed out at shopping malls and health clubs, classrooms and civic events. You couldn't escape them.

In Alabama, if you opposed the Christian Coalition, you lost. If you didn't answer, you lost. If you supported them across the board, you were in the running. Great, you may say, but take a close look at the card. It's designed to appeal to voters who don't follow the ins and outs of policy, while flunking principled statesmen.

The card is structured as a grid, with the candidates at the top and ten issues running down the side. They answers are put in boxes: "Support," "Oppose," "Undecided, or "No Response." You can't amend, qualify, or expand your answers.

Visually, the card is set up to make voters push the button for the guy who gets 100 percent. This may be a smart tactic, but it's incredibly obfuscating, especially given the petty issues the Coalition chose to highlight. To illustrate the difficulty, let's take the test.

1. Balanced Budget Amendment With Tax Limitations. If the Constitution were followed, we'd have a balanced budget. Should fiscal policy otherwise be written into the Constitution? It reminds me of Milton Friedman's desire to have an amendment that specified a certain rate of money growth per year. Who believes that a budget amendment would be followed anyway? Is the entire political class to be jailed?

As for "tax limitations," there's no way to know what a tax is. Are social security premiums a tax? I think so, but the Republicans disagree. What about grazing fees on federal lands? I think they're are a tax too, but who's to say? The Republicans recently changed the definition of the CPI, thereby causing tax tables to be indexed to a lesser extent. Is that a tax? Sure, but no leading politician would admit it.

There are additional questions about what the budget is. It doesn't include "off-budget" spending. And are we to define it as appropriations or outlays? Not even the term "deficit" carries a specific meaning anymore. Congress long ago abandoned the annual change in federal debt,

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P.C. Watch

School Days

From a list of prom rules distributed to students at Maclay Middle School in Tallahassee, Florida: "No spoon dancing, no hip grinding against another student, no hands below the waist, no riding on another's back, no throwing someone in the air, no being passed bodily around by a group, no head banging, no slamming another student, and no jumping around on top of others" (*Harper's*, 6-96). On the other hand, "Some high schools in the Chicago area have begun screening the criminal records of students' prom dates who don't attend their school" (*Detroit Free Press*, 5-28-96).

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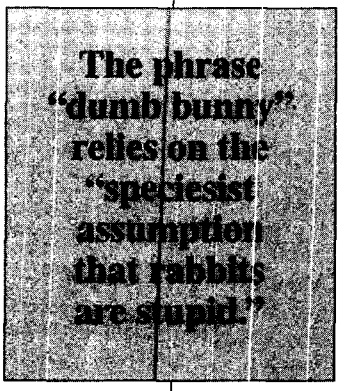
You Have Nothing To Lose But Your Collars

"Women and animals should unite against their male oppressors and put an end to centuries of shared persecution," a new feminist book of essays argues (London *Daily Telegraph*, 6-7-96). Joan Dunayer denounces metaphors like "bitch, cow, queen-bee, and catty" and notes that the phrase "dumb bunny" relies on the "speciesist assumption that rabbits are stupid." Karen Davis says her outlook was changed by a hen, "the first chicken I ever really knew." Linda Vance describes her first meeting with a frog: "I lay still, belly down and legs splayed out; she did the same. We looked back and forth at each other, the sun warming our backs."



The Unsouthern Olympics

Although foreign visitors to the Atlanta Olympics say they want—aside from sports—to see something of the Old South and the Confederacy, that liberal city has done its best to stamp out all traces. Southern history begins with the civil rights movement and not before, a tourist official told the *New York Times* (5-17-96). So when Margaret Mitchell's old apartment house—in the process of a private $4.5 million renovation—was burned down for the second time, it caused not even a ripple. A black cab driver told my sister-in-law it was torched twice "out of hatred for white folks," but somehow the police and other city officials couldn't care less.

Suffering Suffragette

Carrie Chapman Catt, founder of the League of Women Voters and a leading crusader for women's suffrage, was to be honored by her alma mater Iowa State University. But the plan to have a building named after her went awry when it turned out she had campaigned for the 19th amendment on the grounds that giving women the vote would strengthen "white supremacy" (*New York Times*, 5-5-96).

Dress Discrimination

Too many fashion models today have a "troubling blondness," according to the *Washington Post* (6-5-96). Their "reed-thin frames, pale complexions, and light hair" indicate "implicit racism." The "fashion industry is nothing more than a sponge, soaking up ideas, opinions, and deeply held beliefs from society at large. Affirmative action is under scrutiny; rallying cries can be heard for English as the national language; immigration laws are being debated; racial rifts are increasingly profound. And dark skin is out of vogue." And *Vogue*. Fashion "got whitewashed." As the "reign of gangly blondes began, the era of diversity on the runway" came "to an end." ■

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the actual definition, as the measure.

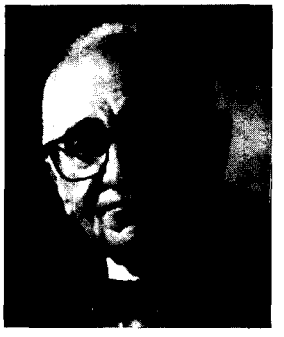
Through accounting gimmickry, the political class can make the deficit appear to be higher, lower, or disappear altogether. Some economists say the deficit should be adjusted by inflation, in which case we are in surplus right now. These economists will have an inordinate amount of influence if this amendment passes.

Anyway, a balanced budget law with no actual tax increases wouldn't be so hot either. It would create a firewall against any and all future tax reductions. In this, and only this, respect would the amendment be enforced: government revenue would never be allowed to fall.

In sum, do we want an phony amendment to the U.S. Constitution that is unenforceable, that opens up a can of legal and fiscal worms, that might actually lead to disguised tax increases, and would prevent any future Congress from lowering taxes? The *RRR* says: Oppose.

2. Flat Rate Federal Income Tax. There is nothing here about what the rate should be. Would it be higher or lower? The only virtue to the flat tax is a lower tax, say at less than 10 percent. There is no advantage for taxpayers in having the current system scrapped and replaced by a system that extracts the same amount of wealth from the private sector.

This flat-tax stuff is part of the gimmickry popular in Washington right now. Everyone calls for tax "reform," but this turns out to be merely another word for tax shifting. The same amount or more in total revenue is collected, and the government does the same level of damage to the private sector.



Dean of the Austrian School of economics, founder of modern libertarianism, and restorer of the Old Right, Murray N. Rothbard (1926-1995) was a one-man army of liberty. The *RRR* is inspired by his spirit, and dedicated to his vision.

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When this Congress says it is going to "lower" taxes, it can't be trusted either, since it raises them elsewhere to "pay" for the tax reduction. The fine print of every tax bill, even the one to temporarily repeal the gas tax hike, includes offsetting tax increases.

Besides, there is no inherent virtue to the flatness of a tax (who loves FICA?). There's nothing wrong with deductions for charitable giving, mortgage interest, or any other loophole. Plus, who would mind progressive taxes if the rates went from 1 to 3 percent, as Murray Rothbard used to say?

If the Coalition had asked whether we favor lower taxes, the answer would be easy. Instead, they ask about a complex Washington trick, which can do more harm than good. Do we want to risk higher taxes in the name of flatter rates? The *RRR* says: Oppose.

3. Parental Choice in Education (Vouchers). This is an easy one. Do we want the federal government spending tax dollars to give people a free ride to private schools, meanwhile nationalizing these private schools under federal educational standards and stripping the schools of the power to determine their own curriculums, disciplinary policies, admissions standards, and promotion and graduation requirements? Vouchers are a liberal-neocon racket, and one of the most dangerous ideas on the political horizon, for they would mean the destruction of private schools. The *RRR* says: Oppose.

4. Federal Tuition Tax Credits for Parents. This may sound less dangerous than vouchers. But to get the tax credit, you will have to file a form that asks which school your children are attending. And will this school have to pass federal muster? You bet. You can also bet that homeschoolers will not be eligible.

Let's say this tax credit passes along with vouchers. Homeschooling parents would continue to pay taxes to public schools, they will also pay a new tax for these rotten vouchers, and to top it off they would not get any tax break for the hours of hard labor they spend every day trying to give their kids a good education.

Moreover, how can the Coalition square the idea of tuition tax credits with the flat tax, which is not supposed to have any exemptions? It is logically impossible to favor both of these. Far better to have actual tax cuts. That way parents can spend their own money on education, and the federal government doesn't tell us which schools it approves of for the purposes of tax enforcement. The *RRR* says: Oppose.

5. Prohibit Abortion (Except in Limited Cases). Let see what this does not say. It does not call for a reversal of the unconstitutional Roe *v.* Wade decision, which took abortion out of that hands of the states. It does not allow a federalist solution, in which states individually prohibit abortion.

Instead, the Coalition would put the federal Secretary of Health and Human Services in charge of babies and birthing. There is a potential for great evil here. Will the government provide free birth control, which many Christians oppose as a matter of conscience? Will there be licenses for birth? Will there be a federally enforced pregnancy diet? Will pregnant women who smoke be arrested? Once the feds get their nose in this area, the possibilities are limitless.

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Far better is the federalist solution. Repeal Roe *v.* Wade—which Congress can do by simple majority vote—and let Christian activists and voters at the state level restrict and outlaw abortion. We don't and shouldn't have a federal law against murder or theft (the biggest violators would be executive agencies anyway), and we should not have one against abortion. The *RRR* says: Oppose.

6. Stop Federal Funding of Planned Parenthood. Finally, a decent question. The *RRR* says: Support.

7. Eliminate Affirmative Action Programs. This is vague. If it means repealing federal laws that impose affirmative action on private companies and schools, great. If it means only within the federal government itself, I'm ambivalent. Are we going to allow the IRS to hire the most qualified people but force private accounting firms to hire morons with degrees?

Under another possible interpretation, this plank would mean that federal law remain the same, but states and localities couldn't have affirmative action. That way D.C. gets to tell Detroit what kinds of laws it can have.

One thing we can know: this does not mean the repeal of anti-discrimination laws, the actual sources of our problems. The government could repeal all affirmative action, define its quota programs as something else, and enforce forced integration under existing law. The *RRR* says: Undecided.

8. Abolish the Legal Service Corporation. Fine, although free services for the so-called poor might be transferred to the Justice Department. The *RRR* says: Support.

9. Term Limits for Congress. This is a leftover from the anti-Congress mania of the 1980s, which left the 2-million strong federal bureaucracy and court system untouched. Bureaucrats and judges can serve a lifetime, while a good legislator like Ron Paul has to be out in two terms.

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Such a law will strengthen the totalitarians and the secret government, while weakening the one part of government the people can influence: the House of Representatives.

The term limits movement has a populist feel to it, but in fact its a well-heeled campaign to distract us from the real problems, which are the executive and judicial branches. That was one great aspect of the Buchanan campaign: Pat called for term limits on federal judges, including the Supreme Court. As for the Coalition's trick, in the long run, it would mean bigger government and more tyranny. The *RRR* says: Oppose.

Here's a list of moderate, coherent, fair, and revealing issues.

10. Abolish the Congressional Pension System. Yes, although we should target all federal employee pensions. The *RRR* says: Support.

How did we score? 3 Support, 6 Oppose, 1 Undecided. If the *RRR* is the most right-wing candidate in the race, and we have no doubt of that!, we just lost the election. Voters saw us as opposing the conservative agenda, and thus assume we're liberal.

There are real life casualties to this racket. One candidate for the U.S. Senate in Alabama, Jimmy Blake of Birmingham, is a prominent physician and a hard-core Old Right type, with solid finances and good endorsements. He should have come in second and been in the run off.

Blake got the questionnaire in the mail. Frustrated by it, he eventually chose not to answer. Thus there is a tiny note at the bottom of the card handed out to every voter that says: "Jimmy Blake Refused to Respond." He got seven percent of the Republican vote.

Down with the Coalition, I say. They are helping wreck the chances for a real legislative revolution, led by people with larger brains and more ambitious programs than Ralph Reed.

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By the way, just so I'm not seen as a negative guy, here's a list of moderate, coherent, fair, and revealing issues for Republican candidates. Possible answers: Support, Oppose, Undecided, and No Response.

1. Lower Any and All Federal Taxes.
2. Cut Federal Spending Anywhere and Everywhere.
3. Abolish the Department of Education.
4. Cut Foreign Aid.
5. No Troops in Bosnia.
6. Overturn Roe v. Wade.
7. Limit Terms of Federal Judges.
8. End Wetlands Takings.
9. Repeal Federal Laws That Encourage Hiring Quotas.
10. Curb Federal Gun Controls.

Down With the *Orange County Register*

by Phyllis Spivey

If there's anything to the idea that voting populations tend to reflect the editorial views of local newspapers, the famed conservatism of Orange County, California, may soon be extinguished.

For some fifty years, the county's family-owned daily gave its readers honest news and independent commentary, for most of that period under the direction of R.C. Hoiles. His editorials advanced the beliefs of an Old Right libertarian who, revering the Ten Commandments and the Constitution, understood the nature of man and government, and the proper relationship of one to the other.

Today, *The Orange County Register* is a sleek, politically correct publication. Except for a small box that on Sundays features old quotations, Hoiles's imprint is gone. The *Register*'s opinion pages have been taken over by left-libertarians who regularly descend into statism.

In January 1993, for example, an editorial confounded conservative readers by claiming that Martin Luther King, Jr., would take a "dim view" of affirmative action quotas. When Lew Rockwell handily discredited the claim in a published letter, the editor opined that if King had lived longer he "probably would have repudiated" Marxism *and* affirmative action.

This was followed by a eulogy for lifelong leftist Thurgood Marshall, whom the opinionist called "probably as close to a great man as we have seen recently in our public life."

"Will Alger Hiss be next?" demanded an angry reader. For, although one would expect to find libertarian comment skeptical of statists, editorial director Ken Grubbs has often taken a contrary approach.

Following a 1990 trip to Mexico, where Grubbs met Mexican dictator Carlos Salinas de Gortari and was entertained by the ruling PRI party, Grubbs gushed about Salinas's "Reaganesque" programs that had reversed socialism and unleashed a market-driven economy.

Four years later, as Mexican voters used Salinas's newly imposed national identity cards to "elect" his PRI-picked replacement, another editorial described Salinas's accomplishments as "stunning": the "next Mexican president, if he acts wisely, could be the new Thomas Jefferson to Mr. Salinas's George Washington."

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As the world knows, just days after Jorge Washington left office, the peso collapsed, Mexico sank into its worst depression in 60 years, and U.S. taxpayers underwrote a mega-billion dollar bail-out. Salinas, on the lam from murder and drug charges, slunk into international exile in Cuba, doubtless to advise Castro on free-market reforms.

But of all the lapses that have littered the *Register*'s editorial landscape in recent years, none have been more pronounced than those involving national sovereignty, and its promotion of the managed-trade, globalist Nafta and Gatt treaties.

Claiming that Nafta "restores the sovereign freedom of individuals" to conduct business without government barriers, editorialists wrote that it would also help establish an "interconnected, virtually borderless world." And when the paper endorsed Gatt, it praised the treaty as one of the developments that are "steadily weakening the effectiveness of national sovereignty—and not a moment too soon."

The *Register* has yet to explain what would replace national sovereignty in their "interconnected, virtually borderless world," but the paper's support of agreements that cede huge chunks of U.S. independence to international socialist governance strongly implies endorsement of a collectivist world order.

Such a conclusion would doubtless bring howls of protest from men who otherwise proclaim the virtues of individual responsibility and limited government. But their criticism of welfare, high taxes, and worsening public education is fatally undermined by their promotion of schemes certain to exacerbate these problems.

In a state where tax eaters now outnumber taxpayers, who are forced to pony up an estimated $5 billion a year to service illegal aliens, open borders means economic oppression. Moreover, because federal laws and leftist courts have made all aliens a privileged class, while preventing taxpayers from achieving any meaningful relief, the push for wide-open frontiers serves the cause of statism. And when citizens tried to limit free public services for illegal aliens through the initiative process in 1994, the editorialists pounced.

Denouncing Californians for doing what their political leaders wouldn't, the *Register* commended "those luminaries of the Right, Jack Kemp and William Bennett" for opposing the proposition, then stooped to quoting P.J. O'Rourke: "I think Proposition 187 is a smokescreen for bigotry. Every political party has something deeply shameful attached to it. And the deeply shameful thing attached to conservative politics is our association with people who are bigots."

"Little Tijuana" is the *Register*'s hometown.

The paper even attacked the proposition's basic premise —that taxpayer-paid public services ought, at the least, to be reserved for citizens and legal residents—as "weakening Americans while fiercely strengthening foreigners." (Huh?)

Despite the *Register*'s best efforts, the proposition passed overwhelmingly, only to be killed by a Thurgoodesque federal judge. Meanwhile, the relentless flow of (especially) Latinos into (especially) southern California is creating a burgeoning cultural crisis, Americans asking, "Whose country is this, anyway" and Mexicans increasingly answering, "Ours. We're here to take it back."

Preferring their own culture to America's and denouncing assimilation, Hispanic leaders demand that streets and public buildings be renamed, that school curricula be reordered, and that political power be shared. With the backing and growing interference of the Mexican government, aliens want the right to vote, and why not? Hispanics will soon overpower the system through sheer numbers, a fact no more evident anywhere than in Santa Ana, i.e., "little Tijuana," the *Register*'s hometown and the county seat. The city's school district is already 90 percent Hispanic.

The *Register* sits in the middle of a county undergoing political, economic, and cultural metamorphosis. Increasingly, employers tell American citizens to learn Spanish if they want a job; government telephones advise callers to punch a number for instructions in English; public schools import teachers from Spain; and local police departments send officers to Mexico to learn the culture.

The *Register* has a name for Americans who worry about all of this: "Border Control Freaks." On the other hand, welcoming waves of freebie-seeking Third Worlders is "championing the eternal verities."

Phyllis Spivey is a freelance writer in Orange County.

Mistakes

by Michael Levin

I think I first noticed this odd turn of phrase a few years ago, when Geraldine Ferraro's son John was arrested for selling drugs. In a cri du coeur on the redoubtable oped page of the *New York Times*, Gerry's plea was that her son had "made a mistake" and now deserved to have the whole business put behind him.

The phrase came more forcibly

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to my attention about a year later, when my wife, who teaches philosophy at Stern College, failed one of her students for submitting a plagiarized term paper. My wife was immediately besieged by the traumatized young thing and representatives of her immediate family, sometimes telephoning at our home to insist that she should not suffer so grievously for "one mistake."

Since then it has been a deluge. When in early May of this year the entire Duxbury High School baseball team was caught shoplifting from a convenience store, the team's captain explained: "It was a really stupid thing to do. These kids are not criminals. They just made a stupid adolescent mistake." According to the school's principal, "they really did not understand why they had taken part in the incident."

Failure to know that stealing is wrong is a moral, not a cognitive defect.

At about the same time, Carol Bayless was arrested when, one 5 a.m., the police spotted two men loading duffel bags full of cocaine and heroin into the trunk of her car. This is the case that made headlines when the federal judge hearing it, Harold Baer, initially suppressed this evidence.

The police had become suspicious when the two men had fled at their approach, and Baer reasoned that police behave so badly toward blacks that flight was perfectly normal; expressions of public outrage from the President on down made him reverse himself.

Miss Bayless's gloss on the whole affair: "What happened, happened. I'm only human and everybody makes mistakes. And I made a big mistake. It happened and there is nothing I can do to change it." Actually, she had made 20 big mistakes, since she confessed to having made 20 drug runs since 1991, the latest being a favor for her son for which she received $20,000.

"Mistakes"? "Stupidity"? The dictionary says a "mistake" is "a misunderstanding," "an unintentional error... leading a person to do an act which he otherwise would not have done." Mistakes involve ignorance of the facts of a case. Aristotle cites a number of examples, like "thinking that a pointed spear had a button on it."

But "Every wicked man is ignorant of what he ought to do and what he ought to abstain from, and it is this kind of error that makes men bad." He goes on: "Ignorance in moral choice does not make an act involuntary—it makes it wicked."

Failure to know that the soda you are drinking was stolen from a convenience store is a cognitive defect, for which, "when it brings sorrow and regret in its train" (more Aristotle) a person may be excused; failure to know that stealing is wrong is a moral, not a cognitive defect. You can't excuse thieves and murderers on grounds of ignorance because *not knowing theft and murder are wrong is what it is to be bad.* People who make that sort of "mistake" deserve to be removed from society and, if necessary, this Earth.

I once had a conservation with Albert Ellis, a self-help guru who believes people lacerate themselves needlessly by wondering whether they are "good" or "bad." I asked him if Hitler was a bad man. Following his argument straight off the roof, he said, "No, Hitler just did bad things; that doesn't make him bad."

This kind of obtuse remark is so hard to handle because it breaks the rules of language: to do bad things regularly is part of what is *meant* by "bad person." Another part is not knowing the difference between right and wrong. Sometimes playing with words is harmless; other times—as when the maddening shibboleth about mistakes becomes ever more entrenched as a bulwark against blame—it does great harm indeed.

My Problem With Anti-Libertarians

by Paul Gottfried

In the March issue of the Catholic traditionalist magazine *Fidelity*, contributor Robert Struble, Jr., airs his "problem with libertarians." They are busily at work "infiltrating the GOP under the misnomer 'mainstream Republicans'" and are now seeking "to wrest control away from the conservatives." From his reputed experience as a Republican activist, Struble concludes that "libertarianism is a pernicious political philosophy." Among its crimes are rejecting such benign reforms as "load limits on highways, child labor and workplace safety laws" and the "current consensus that America must have at least some public oversight or control of capitalism as opposed to anarchic or laissez faire capitalism."

Contrary to this anarchic spirit common to libertarians, explains Struble, St. Paul in Romans 15 praised the government that carries the sword as the minister of God. This teaching is to be kept in mind if we hope to curb vice: "In wielding the power of the sword a democracy dare not exempt the grievous domestic decay that happens to be promoted by non-compulsory and non-governmental means."

But what about the government itself, which bears no more substan-

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tive resemblance to the biblical magistrate than it does to the federalism created in 1787?

Allow me to state, by way of self-identification, that I am no more of a libertarian than Struble. But unlike him, I do not see American public administration or activist courts as the means of setting up a godly society or some replication of the Aristotelian polis.

For example, does the American managerial state protect Christian families against moral depravity? If it does, then we are dealing with a counterintuitive fact. From my perspective, which many others are coming to share, administrators and judges are waging a war on the family, through heavy taxation, the criminalization of gender distinctions, and the enforcement of public acceptance of homosexual lifestyles and marriage. These are the policies imposed by those whom Struble imagines to be godly magistrates.

As for his picture of ravenous capitalists in pre-New Deal America, a few rectifications may be in order. Almost all the legislation Struble associates with the taming of free-market anarchy came after the facts, which were the transformation of the U.S. into the wealthiest industrial nation in the world and the most significant rise in the material conditions of any civilization, which occurred in the U.S. and Western Europe in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The pro-union and welfare legislation that Struble acclaims as antidotes to capitalist greed was enacted after the capitalists had wrought their economic miracle; and the Taft-Hartley Act, which Struble cites as a control on capitalists, restricted the power of organized labor, which had been expanded under the New Deal. It might also be argued that anti-trust laws have done more to increase state power than protect consumers. They have been repeatedly invoked by government regulators against corporations that the government decides to punish for its own arbitrary reasons. Whence the fate of AT&T, which succeeded by providing efficient and progressively cheaper services.

A question that Hayek addressed to the detractors of capitalism might here be appropriate for Struble: What was the condition of child laborers before capitalists brought a higher standard of living to Western countries and (by now the Pacific rim)? Long before the capitalist era children worked for their bread, and they still do in economically backward societies. But where industrial modernization and the free market came together, child labor became unnecessary for the first time for the sustenance of families.

It was not social planning but capitalism's material abundance which brought about this change. Moreover, the major effect of child labor laws in our own time has been harmful to both youth and their families. They have been used to bar teenagers from seasonal jobs and unskilled work, and in fruit-growing industries have prevented entire families from working together during the harvest, as they had done in the past and would like to go on doing. Here one must distinguish between the alleged exploitation of children and what is actually going on, the forced restriction of the labor market through heavy-handed state action.

What is chiefly wrong with our capitalists is their truckling to an overbearing government.

Struble could have made a cogent attack on American corporate heads, if he had abandoned his illusion about a moral state and immoral capitalists. What is chiefly wrong with our capitalists is their truckling to an overbearing government. Like German industrialists under Hitler, our own corporate captains will do anything the state asks in return for its favors. They run to introduce minority quotas and proclaim their respect for gay and feminist agendas, lest any government administrator complain of their hesitancy in accepting new sensitivity guidelines. But in the present managerial order it may be hard to distinguish the economy from the public administration that engulfs it. Through expanding regulations, taxes, and behavioral guidelines, the economic sector may be on its way to becoming an extension of the political.

Making these observations does not require one to be a libertarian, though as a decided nonlibertarian I cannot see what libertarians have done to make political problems worse. It is not they who have given us a smothering state committed to social engineering. They do not defend the occupation of civil society by social workers, tax collectors, and anti-discrimination gestapo.

In a final gesture of disgust, Struble contrasts our wayward libertarians to the sager libertarian J.S. Mill, who believed in collective action against" someone who has infringed the rules necessary for the protection of his fellow citizens." There are at least two problems with this statement, though David Gordon would undoubtedly find many more. For one thing, J.S. Mill was not a libertarian but a social democrat. His *Principles of Political Economy* (1848) advocated the welfare state around the same time as Marx arrived at similar notions. His autobiography, bedside reading for Fabian socialists, depicts Mill's progressive journey away from the free market views of his father.

Then, too, there is nothing in

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Mill's precept about the need for collective action against those threatening life or property which would offend any libertarian of my acquaintance or whose works I have read. Perhaps Struble should go back and look more closely at those whom he finds pernicious. They may not be even half as bad as those he mistakes for Pauline magistrates. ◙

Mozart Was a Red

A Morality Play in One Act

by Murray N. Rothbard

Introduction

by Justin Raimondo

"Mozart Was a Red" is, to my knowledge, Murray N. Rothbard's one and only play. It is a form unusual for him, but one well suited to its subject: the cult that grew up around the novelist Ayn Rand and flourished in the 60s and early 70s. For the principal figures of Rand's short-lived "Objectivist" movement were indeed like characters out of some theatrical farce.

With her flowing cape, intense eyes, and long cigarette holder, Rand was the very picture of eccentricity; she sometimes wore a tricornered hat, and at one point carried a gold-knobbed cane. Her thick Russian accent added to the exoticism. It is a measure of Rand's powerful personality—and the real key to understanding the Rand cult—that, after a while, many of her leading followers began to speak with a noticeable accent, although each and every one of them had been born in North America.

This Russification process was especially pronounced in Nathaniel Branden, her leading disciple. Branden delivered his lectures on the "Basic Principles of Objectivism" in a sonorous singsong voice with a very definite Slavic undertone. Pompous, dogmatic, and utterly self-infatuated, Branden was the second-in-command and chief enforcer of a cult that demanded total obedience and agreement on every conceivable subject—in the name of individualism. Any deviation from the Randian line—and they had a line on everything—was taken as evidence of "bad premises," and grounds for expulsion from the inner circle.

Murray's own experience with the Randians was a case in point. In the late 60s, Murray and a group of his libertarian friends in New York City became interested in the burgeoning Objectivist movement, which had taken off as a result of the success of Rand's novel, *Atlas Shrugged*.

Murray wrote Rand a letter complimenting her on the novel, and soon joint meetings of the Randian "Senior Collective" and Rothbard's Circle Bastiat were being held. As advocates of laissez-faire capitalism, avowedly committed to the supremacy of reason, it seemed as if the Randians would be valuable allies.

But the Randians did not understand the concept of "allies": in their universe, you either agreed with all of their positions, or else you were consigned to the Outer Darkness. (Curiously, on the level of macropolitics, the Randians were grossly opportunistic.)

The Randian ideology was not so much an integrated philosophical system as a mythos, based as it was on Rand's novels. Unfortunately, as she got older, she imagined herself to be a philosopher, and gave up fiction writing to become the leader of a movement.

In her nonfiction tirades, Rand quotes mainly from her own works; this was due not only to her inflated self-estimate, but also to a colossal ignorance. She read almost nothing but detective novels, and her followers, usually considerably younger, were even worse. Although her philosophy of rational self-interest was an eccentric modern variation on a much older philosophical tradition, the only precedent she acknowledged was Aristotle.

While claiming not to be militant atheist—"It would be paying religion a compliment it does not deserve"—she denounced conservatives for their devotion to religion and tradition, dismissing them as "moth-eaten mystics."

Religion was also the main issue in the events leading up to Murray's break with the Randians: although Murray was an agnostic, his wife, JoAnn, was (and is) a Presbyterian. Apprised of this, Rand grilled Joey on the reasons for her religious faith and suggested that she read a pamphlet put out by the Randians that "disproved" the existence of God.

When Joey refused to recant her heresy, Murray was told that he had better find himself a more "rational" mate. That was enough for Murray. The break was finalized by his formal "trial" held by the Randian Senior Collective, which Murray declined to attend.

Murray's real talent as a satirist comes through in his deft characterizations: in Carson Sand, the imperious author of *The Brow of Zeus*, Murray has Rand down to a tee. With one well-placed brushstroke —"Jonathan's nose was permanently tilted at a 45 degree angle from horizontal"—Murray paints a vivid picture of cult leader Nathaniel Branden. His subtle portrayal of Rand's husband, the quiet, amiable, and rather intelligent Frank O'Connor, in the character of George, is imaginative and structurally clever: at key points in the drama, it is George, always speaking quietly amid the grandiose his-

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trionics of the others, who asks key questions of Keith Hackley, the bewildered neophyte, and moves the action along.

Here, then, is "Mozart Was a Red," which represents the lighter side of Murray Rothbard, the side that those of us who knew him will always treasure and remember.

The Play

SCENE:

The living room of a modern luxury apartment on New York's upper East Side. The walls are a lush, tropical green. Sofa (c), several armchairs and sectional chairs (r) are all over-sized, so designed that no one can sit comfortably in them. Sitting back, no one under eight feet tall could place his feet on the floor. Therefore, for anyone in the room, there are only two alternatives: (a) to sit perched precariously on the edge of the sofa or chair, clinging to one of the arms for support, or (b) to curl up in it, feet pressed against thigh and upholstery.

To CARSON SAND, owner of the apartment, this choice presents no problem. She is now curled up in one of the sectionals (lc) cigarette holder raised aloft. This is to symbolize mocking contempt of, and hostility toward, men, and *therefore* rationality and high romantic standards.

CARSON is a little woman with straight hair seeping down one side of her face. Her figure can only be described as protoplasmic, amorphous; her age, too, is indeterminate, but is presumably in the fifties. She wears a shapeless suit with military shoulders, in the height of fashion (Moscow, 1925). Her eyes are beady and intent, and when she talks, she is invariably curled up, ready to strike.

CARSON skyrocketed to fame as an author on the basis of a novel, eagerly bought for its graphic rape scene. She believes its popularity demonstrates the mass devotion to her philosophical message.

Sitting at right, also curled, are her two disciples, JONATHAN and GRETA. They are in their twenties but already stamped with the arrogance of their patron. JONATHON's nose is permanently tilted at a 45-degree angle from horizontal and his straight brown hair is heightened in front by a blond bleach. GRETA is a pretty blonde, with dark skin and a general feline air. Although bearing no physical resemblance to CARSON, she also affects the same type of cigarette holder, and the same brand of tiny matches as the latter. She does not yet wield the holder with quite the same flourish.

On sofa at extreme right, GEORGE KELLY lies sleeping. GEORGE is tall and thin, his once-handsome face permanently marked in an expression of great gentleness, languor, and boredom. GEORGE is CARSON's husband. At center back, is a deluxe radio-phonograph-27-inch TV set. Curled up in front of the set is a luxurious black-and-grey cat, ALFONSO III.

On top of the mantelpiece (rc) next to the set is a framed double photograph of JONATHAN and GRETA, autographed to CARSON.

GRETA has inscribed: "Thank you, CARSON, for giving me a round universe." JONATHAN wrote, archly: "To the woman with the beautiful cat."

Enter: KEITH HACKLEY, a pleasant, earnest, well-dressed young man of 25. Hackley, a graduate student in history, walks in hesitantly from left. GEORGE, awakening, leaps to his feet, and approaches.

GEORGE: Here, let me, please. *GEORGE leads KEITH into the room.*

GEORGE: Keith Hackley—Jonathan, Greta, and...Carson Sand.

JONATHAN and GRETA nod their heads imperceptibly. CARSON extends her arm in a gesture of welcome and points to the sofa where KEITH sits down. GEORGE resumes his sleep at right.

CARSON (*Speaking in a strong Russian accent, e.g., her "t"'s sound like "s"'s)*: Well, Mr. Hackley, I'm glad you could come.

KEITH: Thank you, ah (*hesitantly, for is she Miss or Mrs...?*) ...Miss Sand. (*After a pause.)* I'd like to tell you how pleased I am that you wanted to see me.

CARSON: Oh, Keith, how could I not ask you to come after sending me such a splendid letter about my novel?

KEITH: Oh, it was really nothing.

CARSON (*annoyed)*: Oh?

KEITH *(a little puzzled)*: I'd like to say, though, Miss Sand, that your book was an inspiration. *The Brow of Zeus* was one of the finest novels I've read in years.

Exclamations of dismay and disbelief from JONATHAN and GRETA. JONATHAN and GRETA, by the way, speak in a portentous sing-song with a trace of Russian-Canadian accent.

GRETA *(sharply)*: Mr. Hackley, did you say *one* of the finest novels?

KEITH *(puzzled)*: Why...yes.

JONATHAN *(with tightly controlled rancor)*: Do you care to offer us the name of *any* novel you've read in years that even remotely compares to *The Brow of Zeus*?

KEITH *(sweating)*: Well—I—I really don't...

JONATHAN: If there is one thing we cannot tolerate, Mr. Hackley,

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it is imprecision of language. You said *one* of the finest novels—what were the others?

KEITH: Well, I—Hemingway was rather impress...

JONATHAN and GRETA *(in unison)*: Hemingway! Good God! *(then quickly)*:

JONATHAN: *(in a low, rapid ritualistic mutter)* Of course, you know that when we say "God," we do not imply agreement with the concept. We are merely using the term as a strong, idiomatic metaphor.

CARSON *(keeping her inner fury in close rein)*: Oh, Keith, can't you see Hemingway's death premises in every line that man writes?

KEITH: Well, man's struggle against the bull, the moment of...

JONATHAN: Hemingway is anti-life, anti-mind, anti-reality.

CARSON *(looking fondly at JONATHAN)*: Jonathan, Greta. Come, I think we should give Mr. Hackley more of a chance. After all, he is a lover of *The Brow of Zeus* and that's a big plus.

GRETA: Yes, you're right, Carson.

JONATHAN: Of course, Carson.

CARSON *(turning to KEITH)*: Keith, would you like a cigarette? Here, this is a particularly rational brand.

KEITH *(a bit bemused)*: "Rational...?" *(A slight pause)* Oh, I'm sorry, thank you. I don't smoke.

(Exclamations of disapproval from JONATHAN and GRETA.)

GRETA *(lashing out)*: You don't smoke! Why not?

KEITH *(taken back)*: Well, uh...because I don't like to.

CARSON *(in scarcely-controlled fury)*: You don't *like* to! You permit your mere subjective whims, your *feelings* (*this word said with utmost contempt*) to stand in the way of reason and reality?

KEITH *(sweating again)*: But surely, Miss Sand, what other possible grounds can you have for smoking than simply liking it?

(Expressions of fury, dismay from GRETA, JONATHAN, and CARSON, "Oh!", "Ah!", etc.)

JONATHAN *(bounding up)*: Mr. Hackley, Carson Sand never, never does anything out of her subjective feelings; *only* out of reason, which means: the objective nature of reality. You have grossly insulted this great woman, Carson Sand, you have abused her courtesy and her hospitality. *(sits down)*

KEITH: But...but...what possible reason can there be...?

CARSON: Mr. Hackley, why are you evading the self-evident fact? Smoking is a symbol of the fire in the mind, the fire of ideas. He who refuses to smoke is therefore an enemy of ideas and of the mind.

KEITH: Symbol? But then a *match* is even more of a symbol...

(Further expressions of fury, anger, exasperation.)

JONATHAN *(bounding up, crossing over to KEITH)*: Enough! How dare you mock Carson Sand in that hooligan manner? You wouldn't mock God!

CARSON *(once again in tight control)*: Wait, Jonathan, let us wait before passing final judgment. Perhaps his problem is on a deeper level.

JONATHAN: Of course, Carson. *(JONATHAN crosses back, sits down)*

CARSON *(turning to the thoroughly nettled KEITH)*: Now, Keith, and this is very important, *are you a rationalist*?

KEITH *(again puzzled)*: Well, I—I, that's a very difficult...

CARSON: Come, come, do you hold reason as your absolute?

KEITH: Well, yes, but I—that depends on how you define rationalism. I would think...

JONATHAN *(bounding up, tossing his long hair aloft, and pacing up and down)*: A rationalist is a man who lives exclusively by his reason, which means: by the power of his mind to grasp reality, which means: by the power of his mind to think, which means: by his *own* power to think, which means...

CARSON: Wait, Jonathan. *(Jonathan stops pacing, sits down again.)* Well, Keith, are you a rationalist?

KEITH: Well, I approve of reason, and—and thinking, of course, but I'm not quite sure what...

CARSON *(temper rising)*: Mr. Hackley, we are being very patient with you because we extend every courtesy and every leeway to a lover of *The Brow of Zeus*. Let me put it this way: are you a mystic? *(This question snapped out with flashing eyes, hatred in voice.)*

KEITH: A mystic? Why no, I don't believe in this Zen Buddist business, or...

CARSON *(squirming with indignation)*: Oh! Really, Keith, I am *trying* to hold a serious conversation with you,

KEITH: Well, yes, but...

CARSON: Please give the courtesy of not interrupting me in the middle of a thought.

KEITH: I'm sorry, I...

CARSON: Surely, you must realize I'm not talking about the twisted, leprous Asiatic bum sitting somewhere on a diaper—that's only the most obvious, the most blatant kind of mystic.

KEITH: I know; Los Angeles is full of queer...

JONATHAN: Mr. Hackley, why do you persist, *again* and *again*, in conscious and deliberate evasion of Miss Sand's frank and open questions? We both know you're running like hell.

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KEITH: Look here, I don't know what you're talk...

CARSON: Keith, to put it simply, a *mystic* is someone who allows something else to come between his reason and his reality, who places something higher than his reason. Do you see?

(*There is an uncomfortable pause.*)

GEORGE (*softly, lifting his head a bit from the sofa at right*): Are you religious, Keith?

KEITH (*casting a grateful glance in George's direction*): Oh, am I religious? I see—well, not terribly. I go to church twice a year, Christmas and Easter, you know—but religion plays a very small part in my life.

The silence now is deeper, more ominous. A hissing sound comes from GRETA's direction.

GRETA: *Only* twice a year, he says.

(*GRETA turns to JONATHAN*)

GRETA: You know where *that* comes from...

JONATHAN: Of course. There's a passage on Page 236, Paragraph 2 of *Zeus* that explains this syndrome perfectly.

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GRETA: Yes. And notice how he tries to curry favor with us *and* with the mystics.

JONATHAN: Of course.

KEITH: Look here, I didn't know that you people felt so bitterly about religion.

CARSON: Keith, our *feelings* do not count here at all. Our reason tells us that religion is evil.

JONATHAN (*bounding up and pacing*): Religion is evil, which means anti-mind, which means anti-life, which means anti-reason, which means anti-reality. (*He resumes his seat.*)

CARSON (*looking fondly at JONATHAN*): Well done, comrade.

KEITH: Well, look, I *told* you that I don't take religion very seriously.

(*The pause that now settles over the room is deathly.*)

CARSON (*explodes, agitated. She leaps up*): My God, we are talking about life and death matters and he doesn't... Oh!! (*CARSON sinks back on the chair, covering her head in fury.*)

GRETA (*in voice of low menace*): Mr. Hackley, do you take *anything* seriously?

(*Another long pause.*)

(*KEITH starts to get up to leave. CARSON summons up the last reserves of her patience and stops him.*)

CARSON: Wait, Mr. Hackley, perhaps we can approach your problem through aesthetics. What composers do you like, for example?

KEITH (*sinks back, a bit relieved, feeling erroneously on safer ground.*): Well, the usual, you know. I'm not much of a musician...

CARSON (*quickly*): That's all right. That doesn't matter. Your taste reveals your musical premises.

KEITH (*puzzled*): Oh? Well, I like Beethoven, Bach, Mozart, the standard...

GRETA: Oh!

CARSON: Keith, how could you? I, who know the depth of depravity to which most men sink, even *I* have to ask myself, how *can* they? Beethoven, Mozart, who reek of naturalism, whose whole work tramples on values, whose every note displays the malevolent universe premise.

KEITH (*stunned*): Malev...?

CARSON: Oh, Keith, can't you see the hatred of life in every bar of their music?

JONATHAN: Mr. Hackley, you told Carson in your letter that you liked *The Brow of Zeus* because it opposes collectivism and totalitarianism.

KEITH (*lights up*): Yes, yes, exactly. I...

JONATHAN: Well, how in the name of reason can't you see that a composer like Mozart, on the malevolent universe premise, is on the same premise as the collectivists that you *claim* to despise? They are all part of the anti-mind, anti-life Enemy.

KEITH (*stunned again*): Are-are you saying that Mo-Mozart was a collectivist?

CARSON: Oh, not in that very primitive kind of way. But the system of premises interconnect, on a deeper, and therefore on a more important level. Do you see?

(*KEITH, more and more convinced that he must get out of this place quickly, starts to get up again.*

GEORGE KELLY sits up, intercepts him in a kindly tone.)

GEORGE: Keith, we always ask every new person we meet who is his favorite character in *The Brow of Zeus*. Who was yours?

KEITH: Oh, I liked Joey Fontana.

CARSON, GRETA, JONATHAN (*in unison*): Joey Fontana!!!

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KEITH: Yes, why?

CARSON (*under tight control*): *Why* did you prefer him, Keith?

KEITH: Well, he was on the good side, for freedom, and he was a nice, bright, good-natured, amiable fellow.

CARSON: Ohhhh!! (*Unable to stand the proceedings any longer, CARSON rushes up, runs offstage at right.*)

GRETA (*in tone of deadly menace*): Joey Fontana! The very image of the nice, third-rate, common man. And you picked *him* over a hero like Kyle Crane or Sebastian del Rey!

KEITH: Well, they were all right; they just seemed a bit wooden and one-dimensional to me. They...

JONATHAN (*bounds to his feet, comes to center and declaims at KEITH*): Enough! Keith Hackley, you have had the rare privilege of spending an evening with the greatest minds you can ever hope to meet: Carson Sand, Greta Landsdowne, and myself. And above all you have met Carson Sand, the greatest, the most original mind of our time and of all times, the greatest human being who has ever lived or shall live. And how have you treated this privilege? Above all, how have you treated Carson Sand? I have sat here while you have committed a series of irrational, unforgivable sins against Carson Sand. You interrupted her continually, hardly giving her a change to speak; you openly evaded every question which Carson or I put to you. You have tried to kowtow to us *and* to the mystics, to us *and* to Mozart, to us *and* to all the depravities of our society.

You criticized, instead of asking questions. You mocked like a hooligan, instead of showing proper reverence. And to whom? To this woman who has brought to the world the knowledge that A is A, and that 2 and 2 equal 4. And finally, after your rudeness had driven this woman with the patience of Job from this room, you capped your crimes by saying that your favorite character is Joey Fontana, the mediocre, the *nice guy* (*with absolute contempt*), the second-hander. Thereby, Keith Hackley, you damned yourself forevermore. You have made your choice, Keith Hackley, and therefore you leave me with but one alternative: to demand that you leave this house never to return.

KEITH staggers up, pale, shaken. Goes to the door. There, GEORGE KELLY comes over to hand Keith his hat and coat.

KEITH: Mr. Kelly, forgive me, but you seem like a nice fellow. How can you stand all this?

GEORGE (*softly*): Oh, this sort of thing goes on almost every night. You get used to it.

KEITH But how can you...?

GEORGE: Oh, after a few years, you get to overlook it. You take it easy, you sleep on the couch, say "Yes" once in a while. Hell, it's a living.

Curtain falls.

THE END ■■■

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